

# ISPS HANDA Women's Scottish Open

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

Ayrshire, Scotland, UK

Dundonald Links

## Lydia Ko

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Pleased to be welcomed by Gold Medallist and newest member of the LPGA Hall of Fame, Lydia Ko. Lydia, congratulations again. Just has it all kind of sunk in, everything from last week?

LYDIA KO: I actually don't know if it has sunk in yet. I didn't sleep Saturday night just because of travel logistics and all that. So I went to sleep for the first time on Sunday night. It was pretty surreal. I woke up, like, was that a dream? Did that just really happen?

Super exciting. I've gotten an overwhelming amount of support from the players and the people that I know, and just very grateful for literally this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: You just mentioned you've gotten a lot of support from the players and others around you. What has been the most impactful message that you've gotten from someone after accomplishing what you've done?

LYDIA KO: You know, a lot of the ladies that are already in the Hall of Fame reached out, and especially somebody like Nancy Lopez, every time I see her, she gives me good vibes. You know, always words of wisdom, and for somebody like her to like take me under her winning and support me means a lot.

There's been just so many people, like Meg and Beth said they had like cried watching me. It means a lot. I've seen some of my good friends here, as well. It's pretty surreal. I was talking to one of the moms yesterday and nearly brought tears to my eyes again.

I think as a player and like somebody that's involved, we all know how hard it is. So like we are all going on this journey together, and so many of the people that I play alongside, and to see them support me like this, it means a lot, and I think that's the most, I guess grateful thing of all of this.



THE MODERATOR: Just a couple more from me before we open it up to the media.

Just, you know, how does it feel to have "Hall of Famer" next to your -- part of your title now, and what does the Hall of Fame in particular mean to you?

LYDIA KO: Yeah, it's super cool. Molly gave me the warmest welcome to the Hall of Fame on that Saturday. I think I've said multiple times before, I didn't really think I was capable of getting in any sort of Hall of Fame, and to say that I've gotten in the Hall of Fame at my sport in something that's given me so much is surreal.

I know all the ladies and legends that are like in the Hall of Fame, they are the greats, and they led this pathway for us to have this kind of opportunity. To say that I'm part of that kind of history book is really cool, and yeah, I think I almost need like a few weeks off to like really take everything in, all of this.

**Q. Can you tell us where the Gold Medal has been most of the time the last couple of days?**

LYDIA KO: It's been in my backpack. I haven't gone in the case yet. So I haven't been able to fully treasure it very well. But it's right there now.

**Q. It's nice to be able to look at that, and then it's real will, isn't it, when you look at that?**

LYDIA KO: I haven't actually looked at it in a couple of days. When I was flying with it, it was weird to kind of take it out because not everybody knows that I'm an athlete nor an Olympian or that I had won a medal. So it's kind of awkward at times. I like don't really want to -- like I don't feel like it's bragging but I have to.

It's just, yeah, I haven't seen it. Like we took it out this morning to bring it out here. But yeah, I haven't seen my Rio or Tokyo Olympic Medals since the day I got it, either. Now that I have three, I think I need to find a good place to put them all together.

**Q. On the back of last week, might have been tempting to give this week a miss. How important is this week**



**going into next week for you? You've always enjoyed playing in Scotland.**

LYDIA KO: I think it just kind of made sense that having the British Open in Scotland, to play the week again prior in Scotland. I think before the Olympics, I had joked, Oh, if I had won the Gold Medal, I'll probably not play the week after.

But I was talking to my team and I just wanted to kind of stick to my schedule, and I think it's a good thing, especially kind of playing into something as big as The Open. We don't have the most beautiful day today but I feel like it's like a welcome to Scotland kind of a thing.

But I always enjoy playing links, and we don't really get to play these type of golf courses very much in the year. It's a really good preparation for next week. Yeah, I think I'd rather play and kind of -- whether it's good or bad this week, to just be on that momentum of competitively playing, and I know I get a good three weeks off after The Open. So I'm excited to have another fun couple weeks here.

**Q. You've achieved so much in your career. You've not won in Scotland. How big a goal is that for you going forward to tick that one off?**

LYDIA KO: I haven't personally played that well at an Open Championship very much. Only like two, three times around the 10th-ish I'm I played the British Open.

Yeah, I would love to like be in contention, and I think playing this week will get me more accustomed to this style of golf. You know, I think people -- one of my coaches were asking me, oh, then what's your goal now, even if it's a small goal?

I said it would be really, really cool to win a major championship before I'm done competitively playing. I don't exactly know when that time is but I think it's good to have another goal, and that's definitely a goal of mine. I mean if it happens next week, I mean, I'd be pretty shocked to say, especially because it's like two of the biggest events in my season.

So yeah, I don't know like if or when the opportunity is going to come but I would love to be more in contention and kind of enjoy being in that kind of a situation.

**Q. Huge congratulations last week again. Talk about playing in Scotland there. How do you go about adjusting playing your game in conditions that are obviously not so favourable this week? Is there anything in particular you do differently?**

LYDIA KO: Last week was actually quite like firm, windy on a few days, so in a ways, it did feel like links. That golf course, Le Golf National, is a championship golf course anyway that's held multiple big events like The French Open and Ryder Cup. In some ways, it's similar.

Only even bin the links course, they are all different. Like Dundonald Links is a very different golf course to St Andrews, and I think it is part of our job to quickly adjust to how it's playing.

You know, it is a little bit softer for this time of the year and what it could be around here just because of the rain that they have got in. You know, it's about adjusting and getting used to it as quick as possible. I played nine holes yesterday, and I'm planning to play nine this afternoon. Hopefully that will give me a good idea on how to approach the golf course, and yeah, kind of find my way around to shoot the best score I can.

**Q. You touched on next week there, as well, for the AIG. How special is that going to be playing at the Old Course? Not somewhere that we see women's majors going to a lot. How special is that going to be?**

LYDIA KO: Last time I was there was in 2013 or something. I played it as an amateur when Stacy won. It's the first time the women are returning since then.

I'm excited to go back to a golf course that I played at. I said it's also weird because all of the majors this year, even the ones that rotate, they are all courses I've been to over these past 12, 13 years. I feel like it's showing my age a little bit returning to these golf courses in over like ten years.

But I'm excited to go there. Obviously there's a lot of history there. The men have played there a couple times since we've last gone. So yeah, it's exciting and I'm going to have my husband and my sister and my mom and my sister's husband there. It's great because it will probably be my last time playing the British Open at St Andrews. I'm excited that we can all enjoy it together.

**Q. You've been inspiring people since you actually started playing golf since a teenager, but winning the Olympics, what do you feel that's going to do? Do you think that's the biggest thing that you've ever done in terms of inspiring a new generation perhaps?**

LYDIA KO: I think golf returned to the Olympics in 2016 in over a hundred years, and we had some unusual circumstances with Zika and COVID in the past two Games, and this one is kind of the first one before it's back

to normal. We had 30,000 fans every year, and I think it was truly a celebration of sport and finally golf was fully integrated into the Games.

So I do hope that many more juniors get inspired, not only by myself but by seeing the games and get the dream of them hoping to become an Olympian and represent their country one day.

And playing in the Olympics and representing New Zealand was one of the biggest honours of my life. I think it's definitely a big dream that I think many juniors, not golfers, but in other sports, should dream of becoming because if I can do it, they can do it, too, for sure.

**Q. Have you set a date for when you retire? Have you got a goal in mind for when you finish in golf?**

LYDIA KO: I always said 30 but I said 30 like ten years ago, and I don't even know why I said 30 at that point.

I have bad days and good days, and bad days, I want to quit that day. And good days, you feel like you could go and do this forever and it feels like that moment is going to last forever.

I personally don't know when the ending point is but I obviously have set another goal for myself so I'm not just like cluelessly playing on tour. You know, even if I was to stop today, I'm obviously very grateful for everything that has happened in my career so far, but I haven't really set an end date yet.

But it's something that I need to think a lot about, and it's definitely not just an overnight thought, I guess, yeah.

**Q. I know you've not set a specific date as such on when you think you are going to call time on playing. Is there a possibility this could be your last Women's Scottish Open or even Open next week?**

LYDIA KO: Probably not The Open. I would -- I kind of want to get through this year first and then assess. But this year will probably not be, like, my last competitive year.

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